



**September 2019 – HAND DELIVERED – Washington, D.C.**

**Students Request Congress to Create a Department of Peacebuilding**  
***Kids should be able to walk to school without being anxious of something happening.***

Dear Members of Congress,

Following delivery of letters in 2017 and 2018, once again we bring messages from students, educators, community members and elected officials about what peace looks like and **imploing Congress to create a cabinet-level Department of Peacebuilding (HR 1111)**. Thank you to members of Congress who currently cosponsor this legislation. We urge others *to cosponsor HR 1111, by contacting Kevin Figueroa ([kevin.figueroa@mail.house.gov](mailto:kevin.figueroa@mail.house.gov) or at 202-225-2661) in the office of Congresswoman Barbara Lee (CA-13) as soon as possible.*

“It is our duty as elected leaders to protect our constituents and promote safety in our communities,” said San Diego County Supervisor Nathan Fletcher, who recently met with youth from the **San Diego Kids for Peace**. **“They are doing the daily work to amplify peace in our schools and communities, but the work cannot be done alone.”** He urged members of Congress to support the Department of Peacebuilding legislation to “begin the process of cultivating strategic policy to maximize peace in our nation.”

In 2019, **middle and high school students** from San Diego wrote letters to Congress, about **what peace looks like**:

- “To me, peace looks like **being kind to everyone and not discriminating** [against] different people.” - Adriana Gutierrez
- “To me peace looks like being able to **walk the streets without fear.**” - S. Bundo
- “Peace looks like **happiness**. Everyone is **stress free** there’s no tension between us and other countries, and everything is super calm and relaxing. There is no fear in the world and for once everyone can let loose and be free.” - Shefaa Abdalla
- “Peace means there is **no violence** and the **world is safe.**” - Ronald G
- “Peace looks like **no war, no guns, [no] hunger ....**” - Jacob Pichardo
- “Peace looks like where **countries aren’t always fighting**, people don’t have to be super nice and friendly, but aren’t in constant fear of war.” - Phoenix Cray
- Peace ... “people **settling their differences by talking it out**, rather than lashing out at each other ... accepting each other and their differences ...” - Francesca Dale
- Peace means **enjoying my family and friends**, being able to have and express my own opinion without fear of a negative reaction, being able to work together to resolve conflicts without violence, **accepting all people for who they are and realizing everyone is unique and beautiful in their own way.** - Isabella Hudson
- Student after student reflected on the horrible mass shooting in Parkland, Florida and put themselves “into the shoes of the high schoolers who had to witness seventeen people’s lives taken by the gun attacker. I think this is a prodigious burden for any high school student to bear ...” They call for **action now to change gun laws** so “fewer or no more people are killed by mass shootings.”

- “To me peace looks like a **world without hatred, violence, war, and without a need to kill.** What this means to me is that we wouldn’t have to resort to war all the time nor jump to conclusion to execute a person or have the need to shoot up a school, instead it would be better to find another way to solve a certain issue.” - Hugo Mendoza

Students also **requested Congress to establish a Department of Peacebuilding:**

- “Members of the congress it would be **really smart of you to add a department of peace** in the federal government because that way we can track what is going on with the world ...” - Jacob Pichardo
- “**If you have a clear understanding of peace, you should know we need this department.** Imagine a world without caos [sic].” - S. Bundi
- “I am writing to ask you to **help me make the world at peace.**” - Ronald G.
- “It is important to have a department of peacebuilding in the federal government because it is **important to have people who can keep things in check.**” - Hugo Mendoza
- A Department of Peacebuilding would “**help prevent future wars and fights with other countries.**” - Illegible
- “It is important to have a Department of Peacebuilding in the federal government because **without it then [the] world would crumble.**” - Adriana Gutierrez
- “Help make the world more peaceful **not just [for] me but future generations.**” S. Knill
- “It is important to have a department of Peacebuilding ... because **everyone deserves to be happy. Kids should be able to walk to school without being anxious of something happening,** everyone should be able to feel happy and relaxed.” -Shefaa Abdalla
- “I am writing this to ask your support in making our communities and world safer by establishing a cabinet-level Department of Peacebuilding. Our world has experienced so much hate amongst many people and it has taken many lives and I feel that it is **time we change that and start with making a safer world ... I believe that with this department many more social issues would be addressed and helped.**” - Francesca Dale

Community member Roxanne McNiell remembered being bullied as a young girl. “... words can hurt and were as painful as a physical blow ... **peace building is so essential especially for those tender developing ages.**” We still witness bullying. “... physical and verbal attacks that are so prevalent in our society. Schools, workplaces, homes and neighborhoods.” We can lessen the blow of hurtful, abusive, violent and demeaning actions by “**educating, uniting, supporting, growing awareness and actions towards a more peaceful environment.**”

**It is time to create a Department of Peacebuilding.**

Please let us know if you will cosponsor the Department of Peacebuilding (HR 1111) and if you request an email copy of the student letters. In order to honor our earth, these letters are available by email.

**Nancy Merritt, [sunmntain@aol.com](mailto:sunmntain@aol.com)**

**On Behalf of the National Department of Peacebuilding Committee  
And Department of Peacebuilding Supporters,  
Including Students and Community Supporters in San Diego, CA**

***PEACE is my new acronym for Pleasant Energy And Compassionate Engagement ...  
I would tell my students don't let anyone steal your joy ... Anything good is something you have to  
nurture and work at. Just as peace building is one of those aspects. Love is the greatest and peace  
is a partner of that.*** - Roxanne McNiell